Full Senate Hearing Sought For Talmadge Funds Probe

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ATLANTA (UPI) — The Senate Ethics Committee will be asked to call for a full Senate hearing on charges that Sen. Herman Talmadge (D-Ga.) converted Senate funds for his own use, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported yesterday.

The newspaper said the committee staff will recommend that the investigation be expanded to determine if Talmadge kept a secret bank account to launder illegally obtained Senate funds and campaign contributions.

Talmadge has been locked in a bitter verbal war with his former chief aide, Daniel Minchew, who says the senator ordered him to establish the bank account to deposit unreported campaign donations for his own use. Talmadge vehemently denies the charge.

The newspaper said Minchew will testify Tuesday before the Ethics Committee. He has already testified before the panel's staff team, headed by special counsel Carl Eardley.

Eardley, the newspaper said, will recommend to the committee chairman, Sen. Adlai E. Stevenson (D-Ill.), that the probe be expanded into a full Senate hearing.

Such a hearing would focus on whether Talmadge had any knowledge of the account at Riggs National Bank in Washington and of improperly drawn Senate expenses he allegedly was granted over a five-year period.

The last time the Ethics Committee conducted a formal Senate hearing was in 1967 when the late Thomas J. Dodd (D-Conn.) was censured for converting Senate funds to personal use.

Eardley is also listed "Of Counsel" at Beveridge, Fairbanks & Diamond, One Farragut Square South, Washington, D.C. 20006 (638-7800)